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AMAR CHITRA KATHA

No. 391 Rs. 5/-

Mahabharata-32

THE FALL OF BHEESHMA

Sri Vidyabharathi Book Centre, Sringeri

Amar Chitra Katha
No. 391, October 15, 1987

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Veda Vyasa's Epic on the Bharata race was first recited in public by his disciple Vaishampayana at the behest of the ageless seer Vyasa himself.

The recital took place in the august presence of King Janamejaya—great grandson of Vyasa—and the many learned sages who had assembled for Janamejaya's Sarpa Satra (a 12-year-long snake sacrifice).

The thirty-first session of our rendering of the Mahabharata described the first nine days of the great Mahabharata war. The important men to die fighting were Uttara and Shankha, the two sons of Virata, the king of Matsya; and Arjuna's son Iravan. The end of the ninth day saw Duryodhana disillusioned with Bheeshma's leadership of the Kaurava forces since the great patriarch would not take up arms against the five Pandava brothers.

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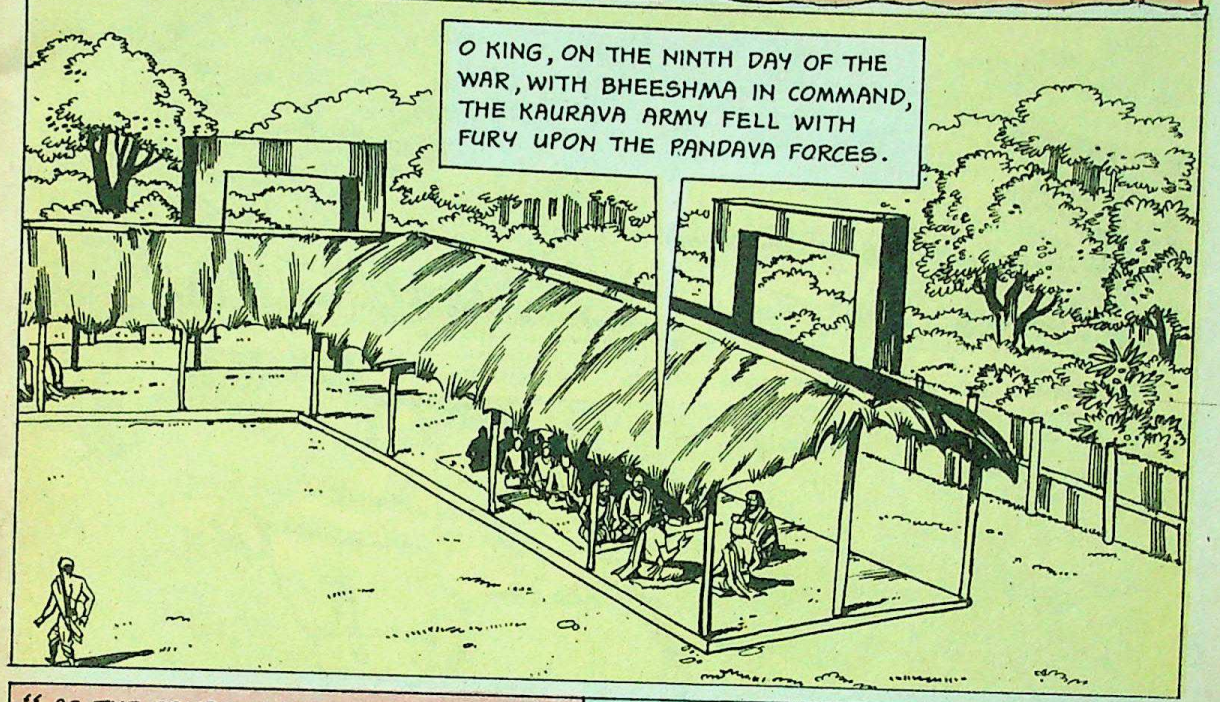

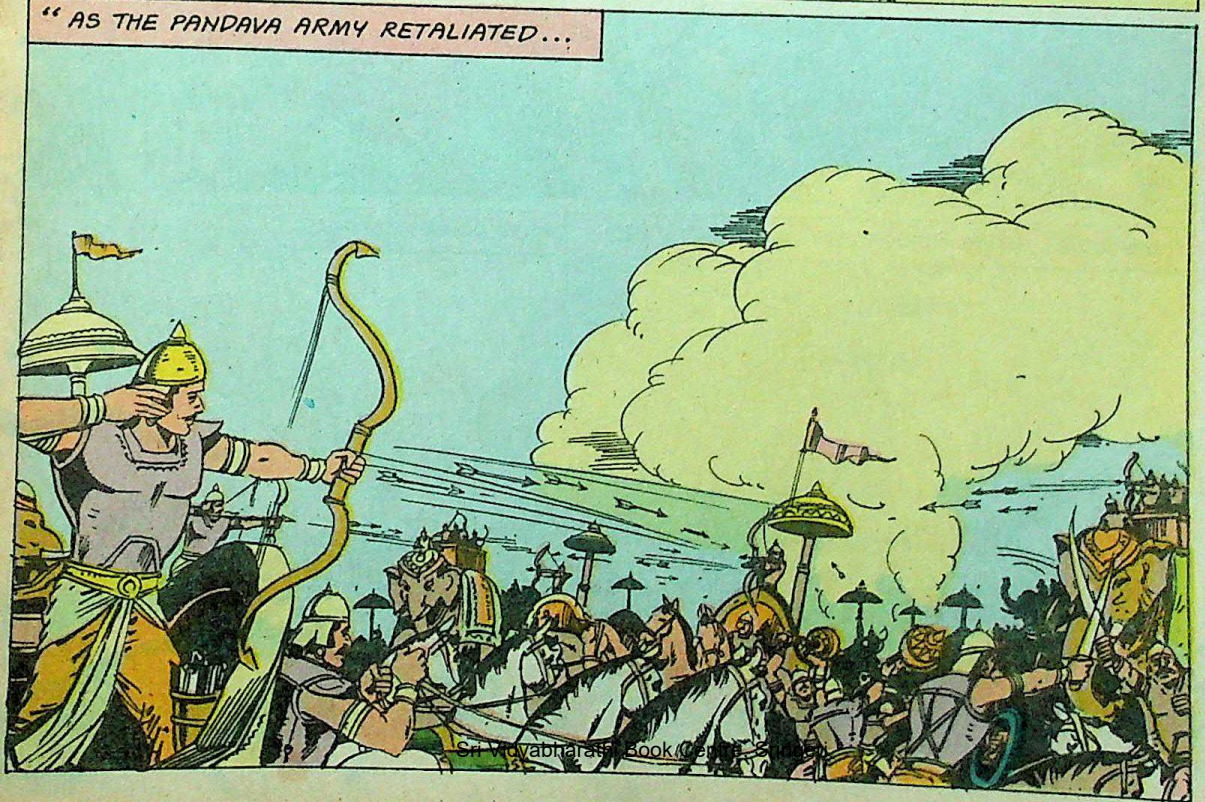

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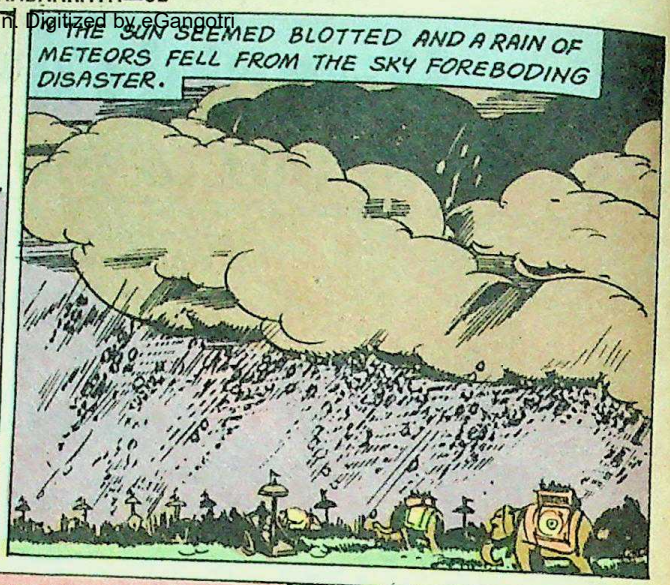
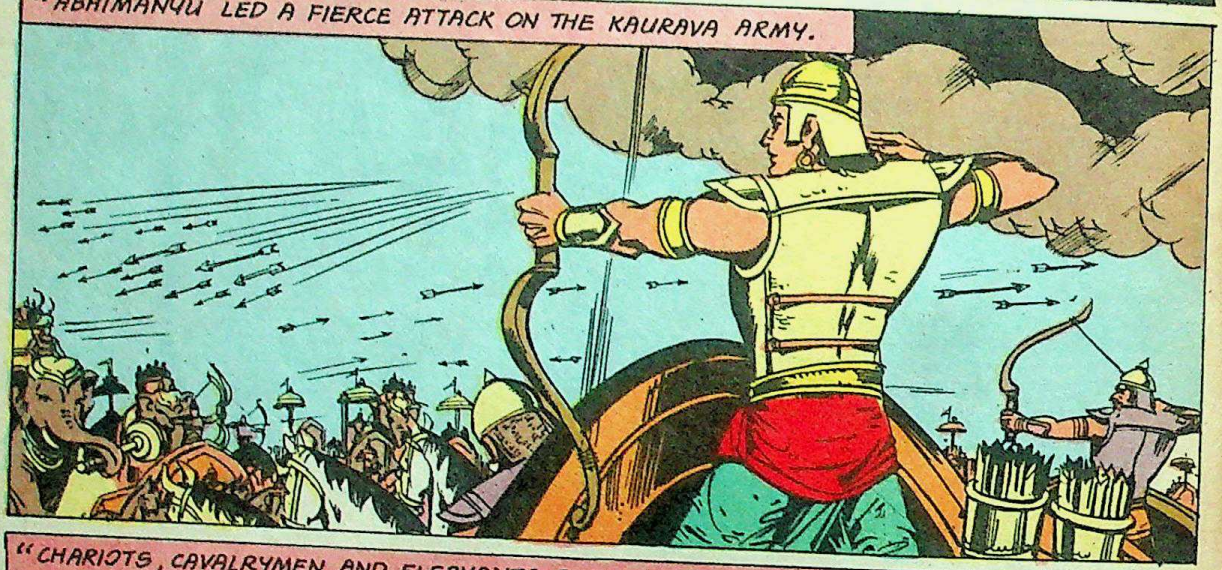
"...EVIL OMENS APPEARED.

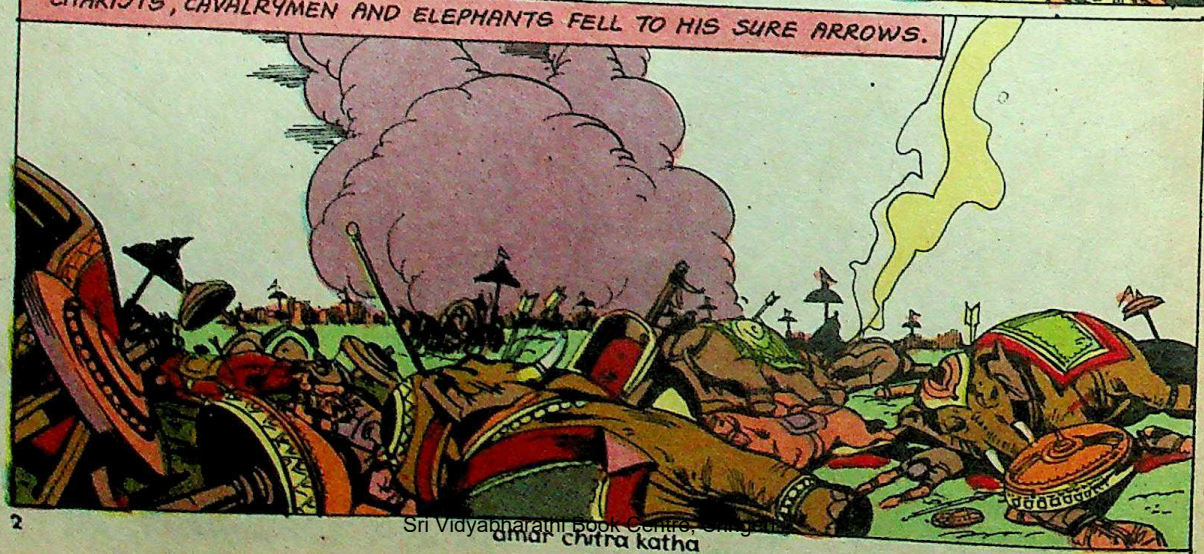
"THE SUN SEEMED BLOTTED AND A RAIN OF METEORS FELL FROM THE SKY FOREBODING DISASTER.



"ABHIMANYU LED A FIERCE ATTACK ON THE KAURAVA ARMY.



"CHARIOTS, CAVALRYMEN AND ELEPHANTS FELL TO HIS SURE ARROWS.



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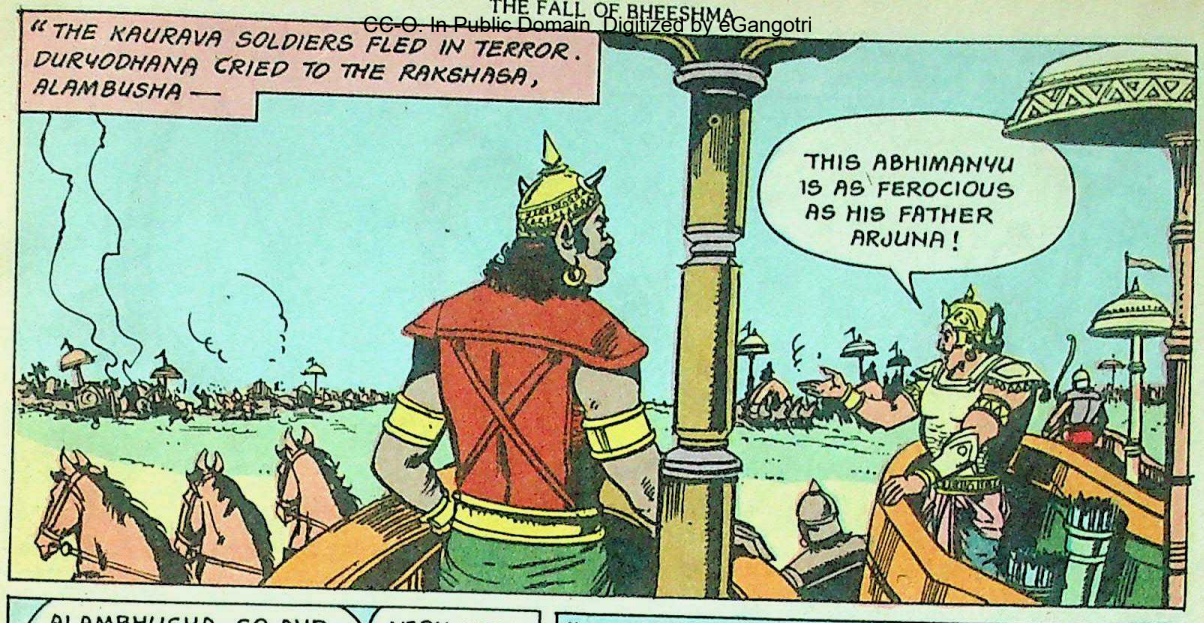

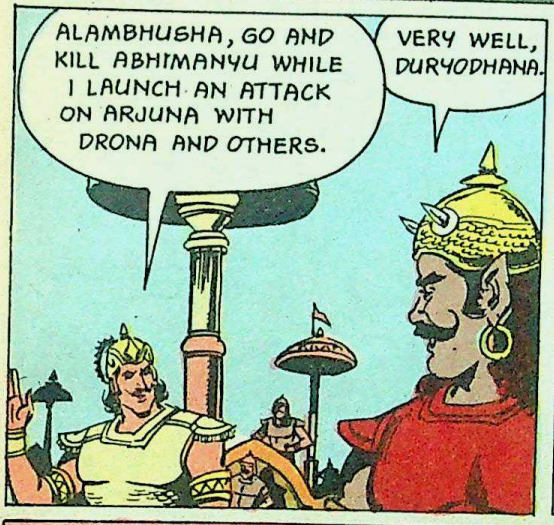

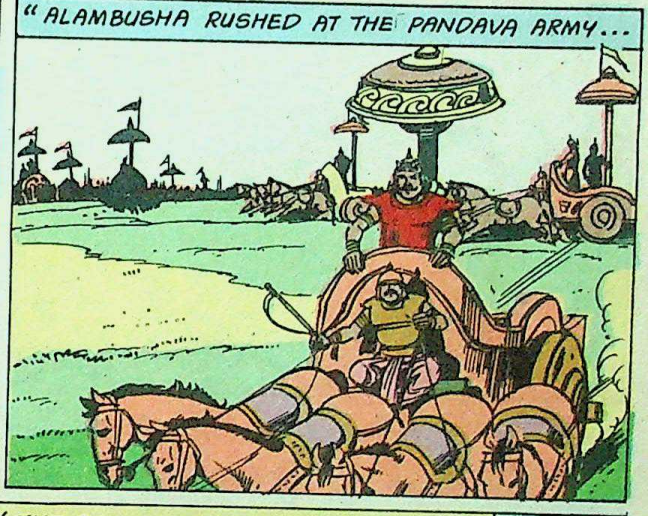

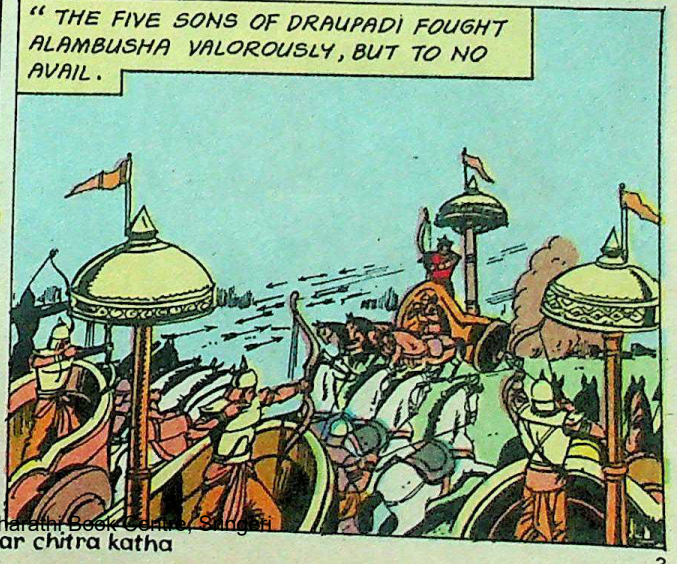

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"ABHIMANYU THEN CAME TO THE RESCUE OF HIS BROTHERS.

"HE RELEASED POWERFUL WEAPONS ON ALAMBUSHA.

"WHEREUPON THE RAKSHASA, USING HIS MAGICAL POWERS, ENVELOPED THE PANDAVA ARMY IN DARKNESS.

OH! I CAN'T SEE ANYTHING!

WHERE IS ABHIMANYU?

"ABHIMANYU THEN RELEASED THE BHASKARA WEAPON...

"... WHICH DISPELLED THE DARKNESS. NOW LIGHT SHONE FORTH.

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"HAVING DESTROYED THE ILLUSION OF DARKNESS CREATED BY ALAMBUSHA, ABHIMANYU TORMENTED HIM WITH ARROWS.

"ALAMBUSHA HAD TO FLEE THE BATTLEFIELD IN MORTAL FEAR OF THE YOUNG ABHIMANYU.

"THE KAURAVAS SET UPON BHEEMA AN ENTIRE BATTALION OF ELEPHANT-WARRIORS.

"DESCENDING FROM HIS CHARIOT BHEEMA ATTACKED THE ELEPHANTS AND THEIR RIDERS.

"HE SLEW MANY OF THEM.

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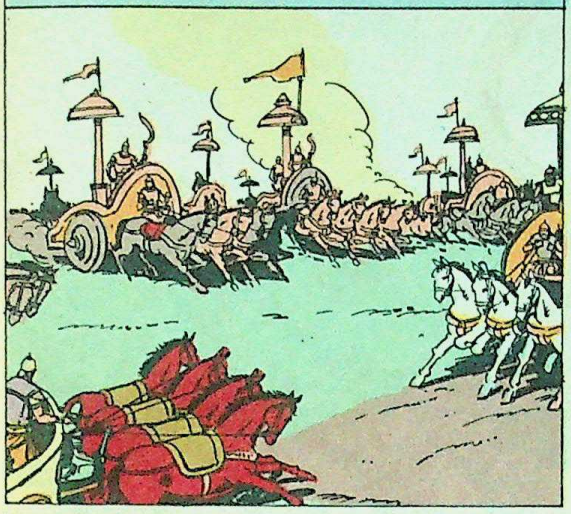
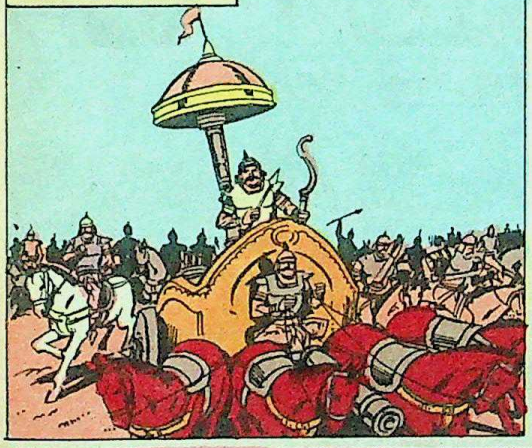
"THE PANDAVAS CAME TO THE RESCUE OF SATYAKI AND SURROUNDED BHEESHMA.

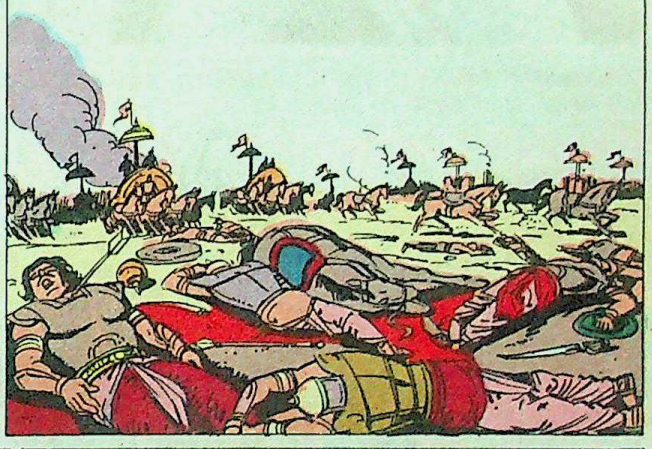


"SEEING THIS, DURYODHANA SAID TO DUHSHASANA —

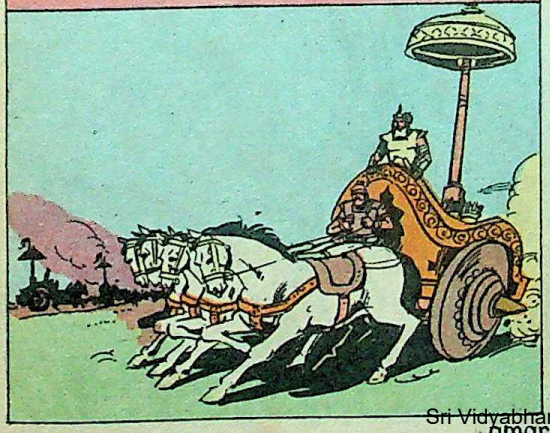
"DURYODHANA THEN SENT SHAKUNI WITH A TEN-THOUSAND STRONG CAVALRY TO CHECK THE ADVANCE OF THE PANDAVAS.



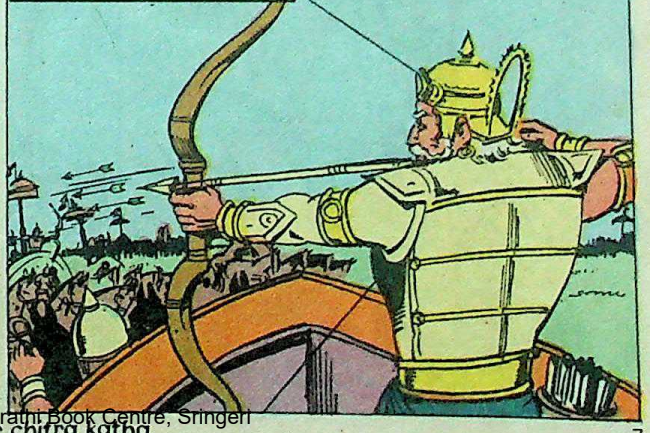
"BUT YUDHISHTHIRA, NAKULA AND SAHADEVA ROUTED IT COMPLETELY.



"RESOLVED TO CONTAIN THE INDOMITABLE PANDAVAS, BHEESHMA CAME TO THE FORE.



"HE LET LOOSE ALL HIS STRENGTH AGAINST THE PANDAVA ARMY.



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"BEFORE SUNSET THE BATTLEFIELD WAS A SCENE OF UTTER RUIN AND DESOLATION.

RUN! RUN!

"KRISHNA BROUGHT THE CHARIOT TO A HALT AND SAID TO ARJUNA —

THIS IS YOUR CHANCE, O ARJUNA! ATTACK BHEESHMA NOW!

"A RELUCTANT ARJUNA REPLIED —

AS YOU WISH, KRISHNA. STEER THE CHARIOT TOWARDS BHEESHMA.

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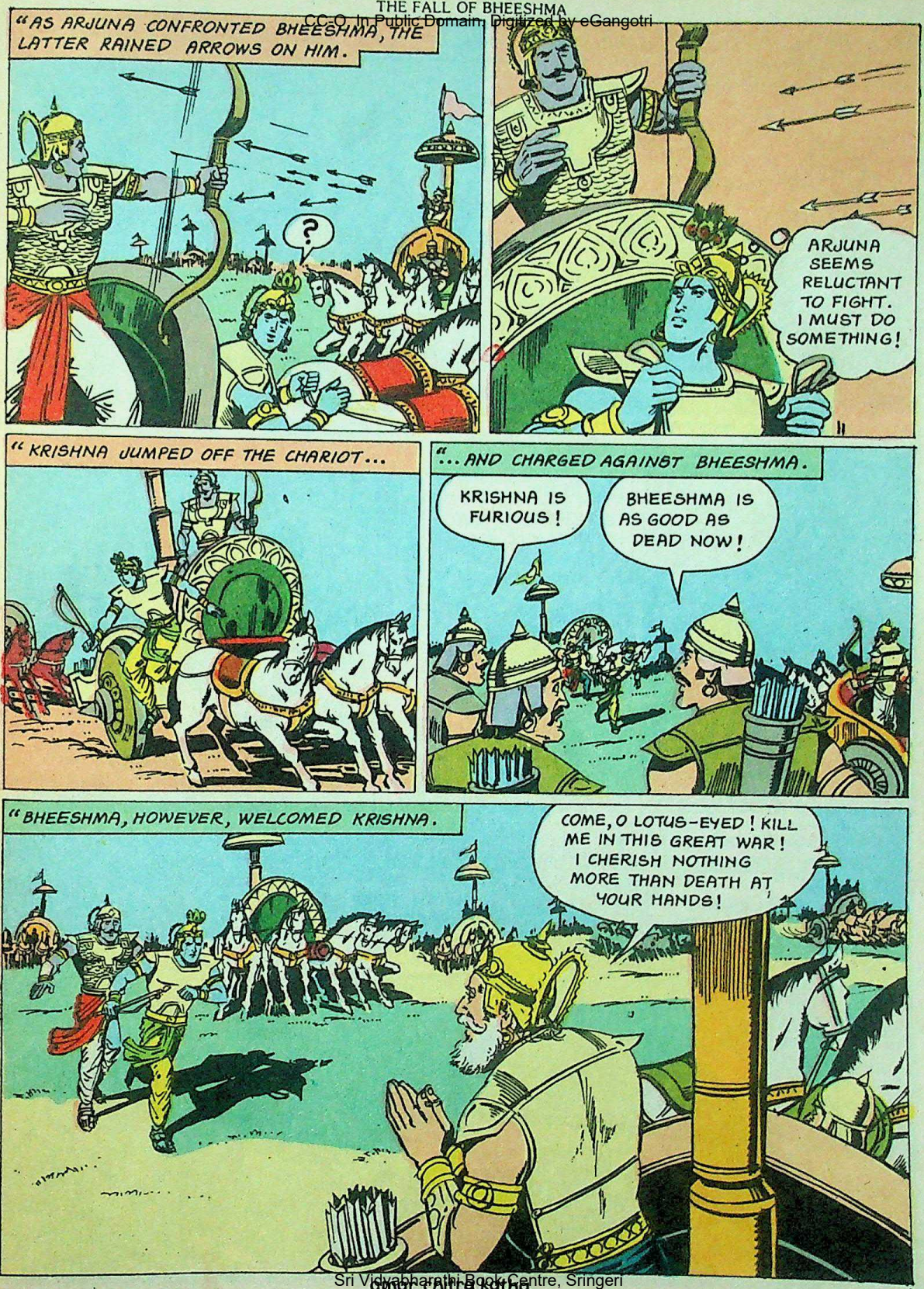

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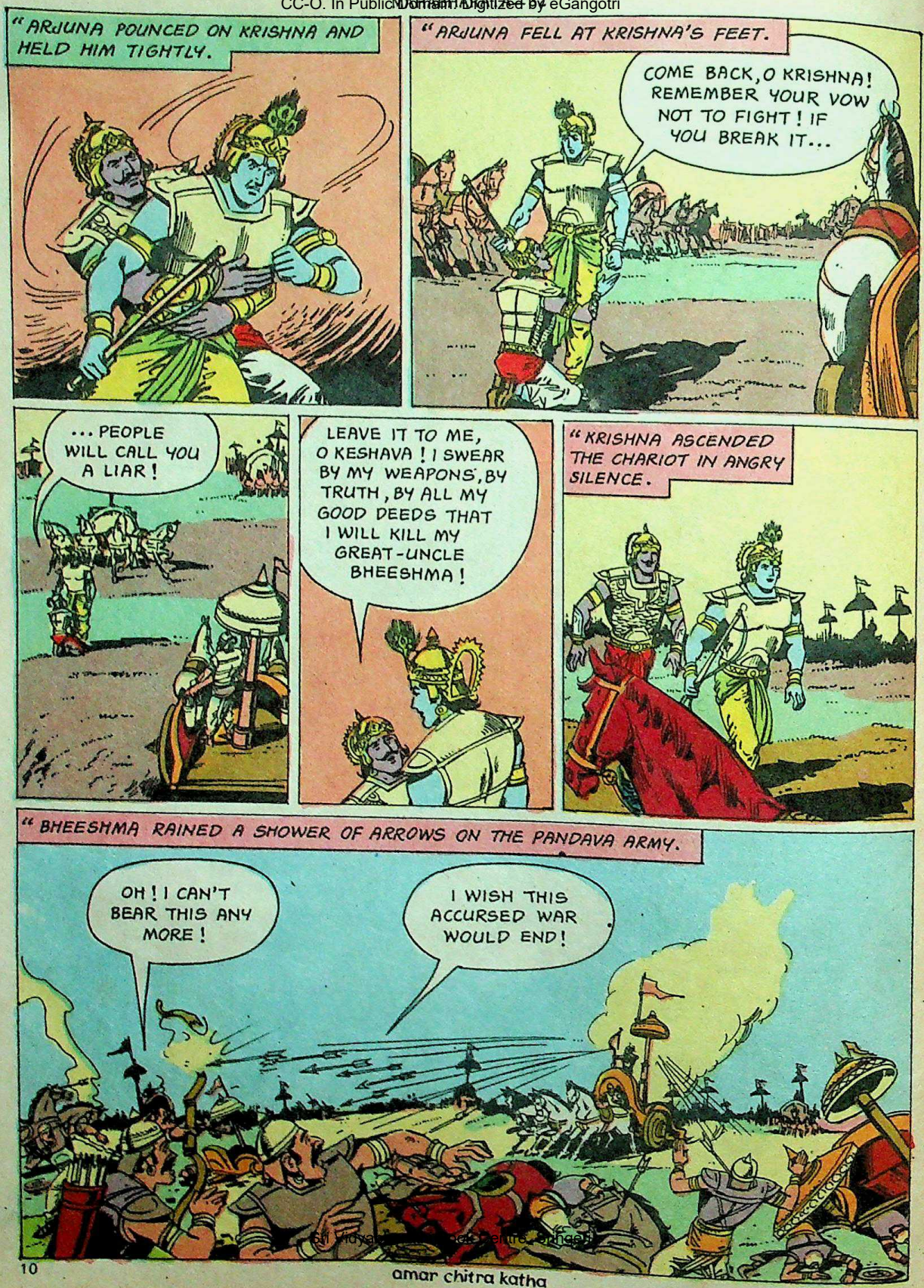

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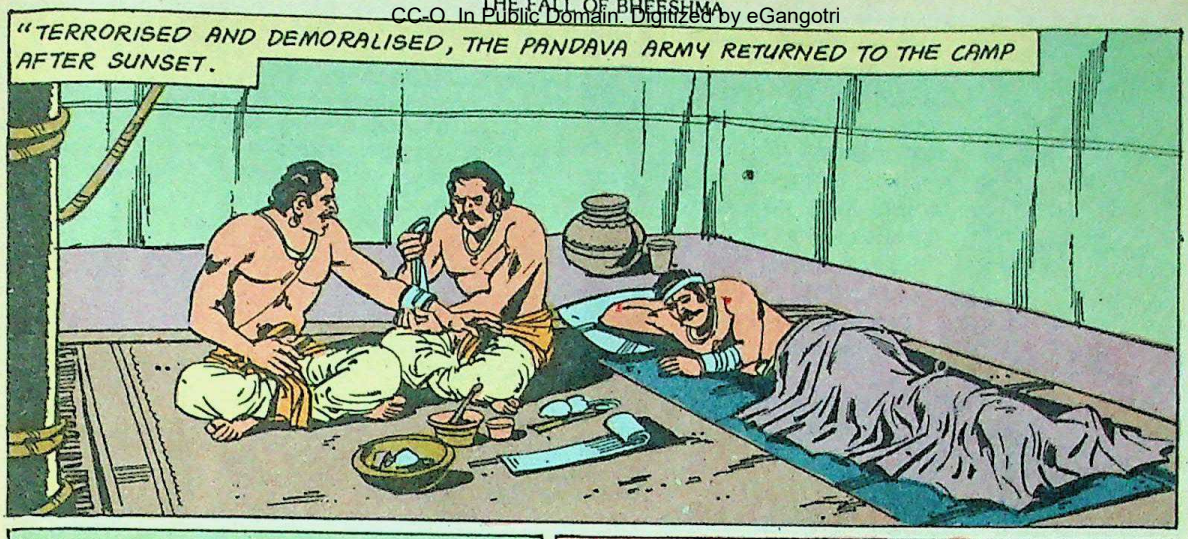

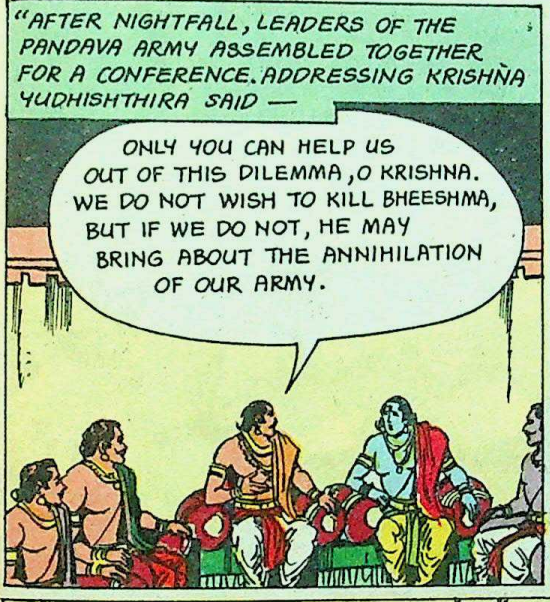

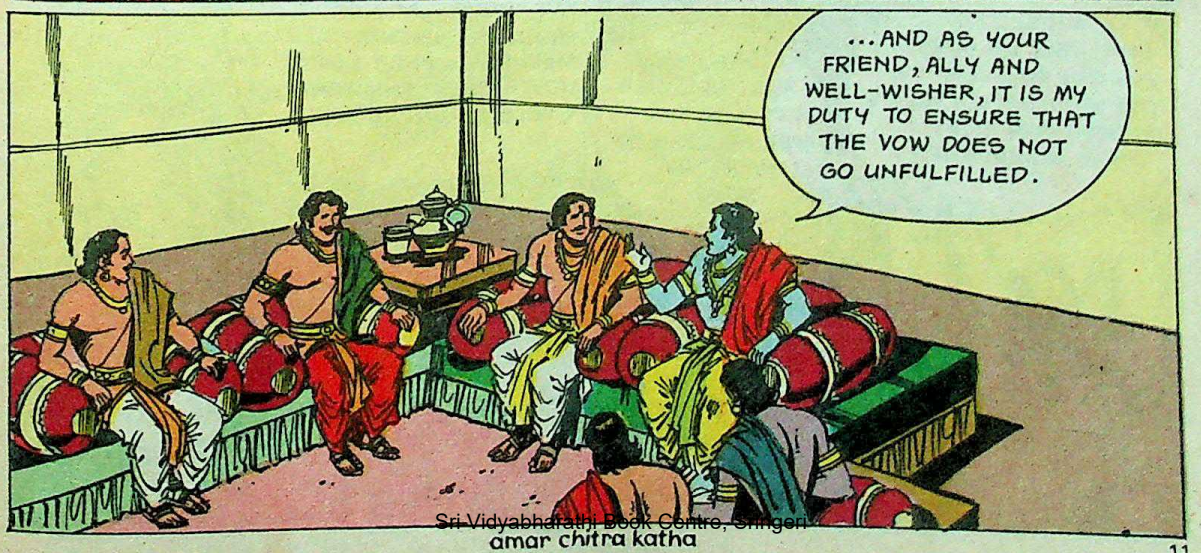

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NO, KRISHNA. I WILL NOT ASK YOU TO GO AGAINST THE OATH YOU HAVE TAKEN OF NOT TAKING UP ARMS IN THIS BATTLE. BHEESHMA HAS PROMISED US EVERY HELP OUTSIDE THE BATTLEFIELD. LET US ALL GO AND ASK HIM.

"THE PANDAVAS, ALONG WITH KRISHNA, THEN WENT TO MEET BHEESHMA.

"THEY PAID OBEISANCE AT BHEESHMA'S FEET.

WELCOME, O KRISHNA. WELCOME, O PANDAVAS. WHAT IS IT THAT YOU WANT ME TO DO FOR YOU? ASK, AND IT WILL BE DONE!

"YUDHISHTHIRA QUERIED—

O OMNISCIENT ONE! TELL US HOW YOU CAN BE KILLED ON THE BATTLEFIELD SO AS TO SAVE OUR ARMY FROM SLAUGHTER!

IT IS TRUE THAT YOU CANNOT WIN THE WAR AS LONG AS I AM ALIVE. SO...

...LET ARJUNA SHOOT HIS ARROWS AT ME STANDING BEHIND SHIKHANDI. SINCE I WILL NOT ATTACK SHIKHANDI, I WILL BE VULNERABLE.

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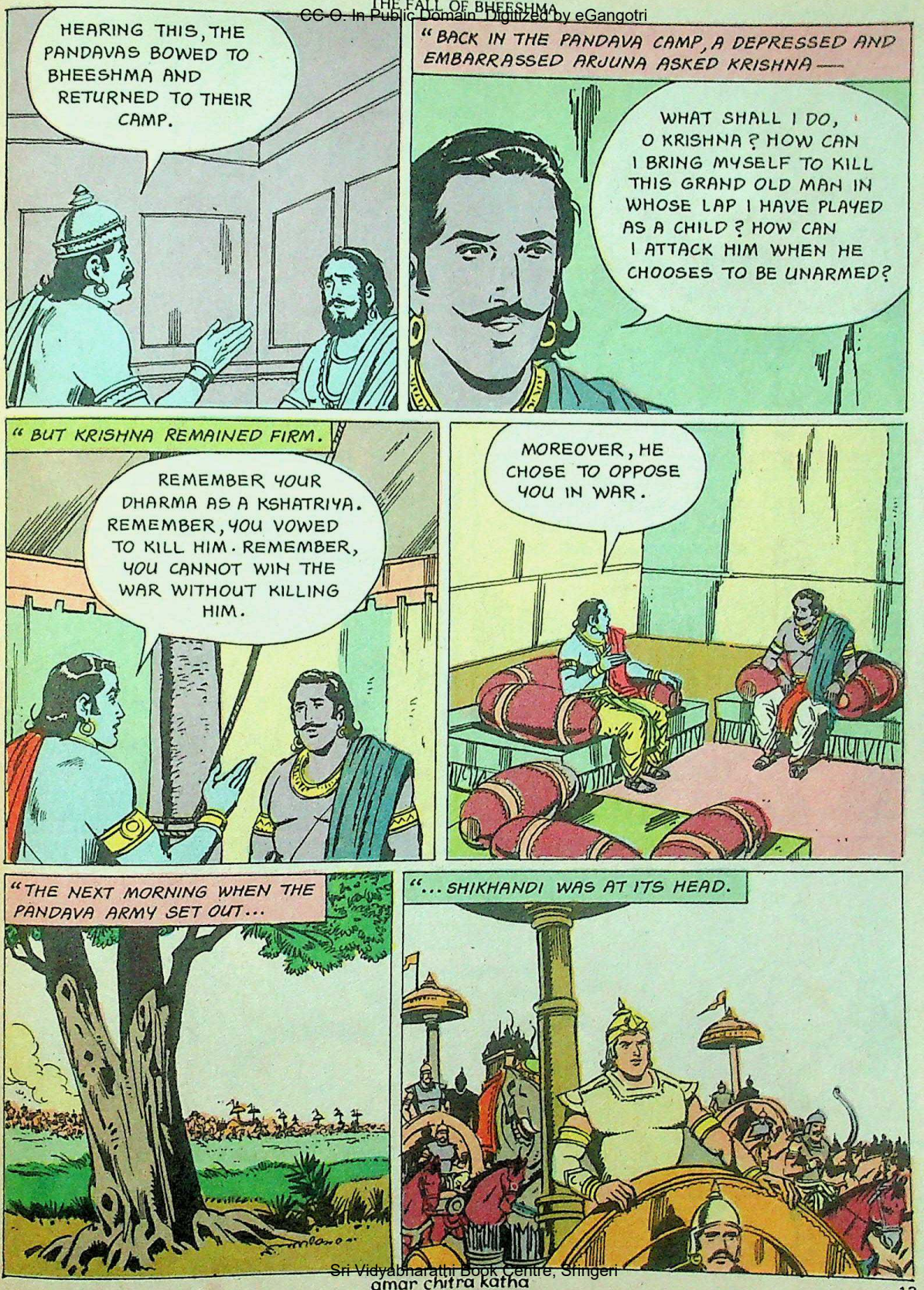

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"THE TWO ARMIES CHARGED AGAINST EACH OTHER.

"WHEN BHEESHMA AND SHIKHANDI CAME FACE TO FACE—

I SHALL KILL YOU TODAY, O BHEESHMA.

I SHALL NOT TAKE UP ARMS AGAINST YOU.

"WHEN ARJUNA SAW THIS CONFRONTATION, HE SAID TO SHIKHANDI —

KILL HIM, SHIKHANDI, FOR HE CANNOT HARM YOU. I TOO WILL HELP YOU. SHAME ON US IF WE TWO TOGETHER CANNOT KILL HIM.

THE REDOUBTABLE BHEESHMA WAS, HOWEVER, MORE THAN A MATCH FOR THE PANDAVA ARMY.

"IN THE INTENSE WARFARE THAT ENSUED ...

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"Yes, it's me— in an ad for a white shoe cleaner.

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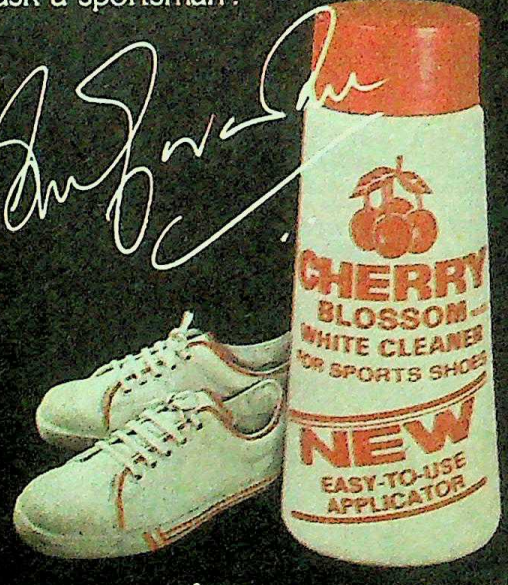
Now, ask me why!"

"19 years ago, I was sent off the field for turning up in dirty white shoes. I learnt my lesson that day – you must first look like a sportsman before you can call yourself a sportsman!

Okay, so maybe there are people who think it isn't important to look like a sportsman. But ask any dedicated sportsman and he'll never tell you that! Because he's as particular about his kit and dress as he is about his game.

That's why, to my mind, if you care for the game, you'll always care about the way you dress for it – down to the last detail.

So, tell me then, can your kit really be complete without a white shoe cleaner? Go on, ask a sportsman!



Be a sportsman... down to your feet!"

CHERRY WHITE CLEANER

Sri V

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"ARJUNA'S SHARP ARROWS WOUNDED BHEESHMA.

"BHEESHMA SAID TO DUHSHASANA —

THESE SHARP AND MIGHTY ARROWS CANNOT BE THOSE OF SHIKHANDI. I AM CERTAIN THEY ARE ARJUNA'S.

"THE PANDAVAS RAINED AN INCESSANT SHOWER OF ARROWS ON BHEESHMA.

"WITH A FEW HOURS TO GO BEFORE SUNSET, BHEESHMA LOOKED TO THE SKY IN THE EAST ...

"... AND FELL.

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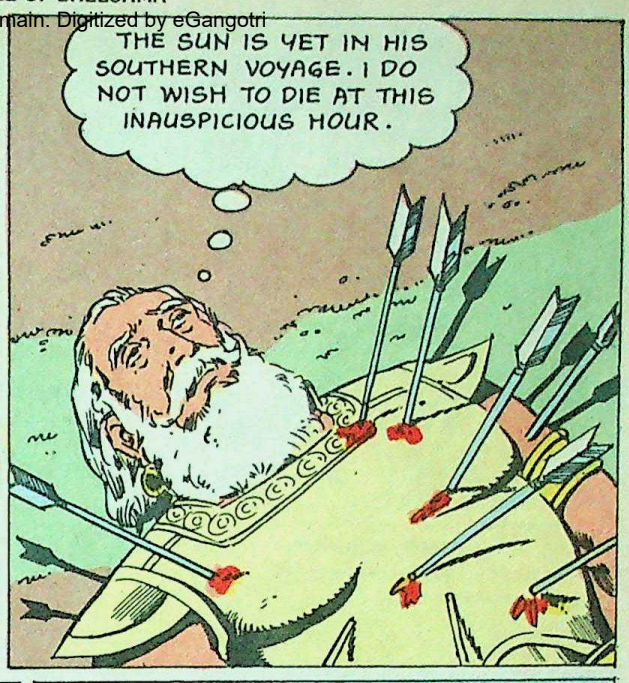

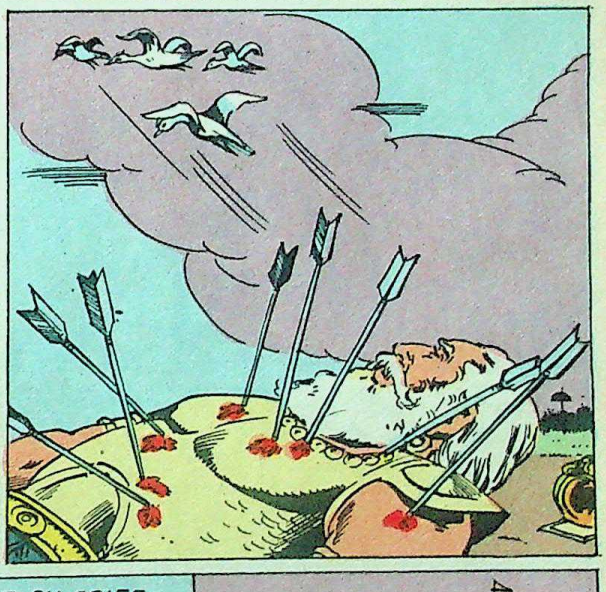

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* A MYTHICAL LAKE SAID TO EXIST ON THE HIMALAYAS.

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"A SHADOW OF GLOOM SPREAD OVER THE WHOLE KAURAVA ARMY.

THIS IS THE END OF DURYODHANA.

WE HAVE AS GOOD AS LOST THE WAR NOW.

"THE PANDAVAS, HOWEVER, WERE JUBILANT.

"DHRITARASHTRA WAS BESIDE HIMSELF WITH SORROW.

OH! WHY AM I STILL ALIVE WHEN MY REVERED UNCLE LIES DYING ON THE BATTLEFIELD? O SANJAYA! TELL ME HOW ALL THE WARRIORS REACTED TO THIS EVENT.

"SOON, THE KAURAVA AND PANDAVA WARRIORS CAME AND STOOD ALL AROUND BHEESHMA.

"BOTH DRONA AND THE PANDAVAS SENT MESSENGERS ALL AROUND, CALLING FOR A CEASE FIRE.

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"BHEESHMA SPOKE UP—

WELCOME, O VALIANT WARRIORS! I AM PLEASED TO SEE YOU ALL HERE.

THEN—

MY HEAD HANGS LOOSE. ONE OF YOU MUST GIVE ME A HEAD-REST.

"SEVERAL SOFT AND EXCELLENT PILLOWS WERE BROUGHT BUT BHEESHMA REFUSED THEM ALL.

THESE ARE NOT FIT FOR A SOLDIER.

ARJUNA, GIVE ME A HEAD-REST BEFITTING MY BRAVERY AND COURAGE.

"ARJUNA SET THREE ARROWS ON HIS GANDEEVA ...

"...AND SHOT THEM INTO THE GROUND UNDER BHEESHMA'S HEAD.

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"BHEESHMA WAS PLEASED.

O ARJUNA! YOU HAVE GIVEN ME THE MOST APPROPRIATE HEAD-REST.

"AND THEN —

GIVE UP STRIFE NOW, O KINGS.

"AS PHYSICIANS CAME UP TO REMOVE THE ARROWS FROM BHEESHMA'S BODY, HE CALLED OUT TO DURYODHANA.

SON, SEND THESE PHYSICIANS AWAY WITH DUE HONOUR. I WISH TO BE CREMATED, AS BEFITS A HERO, ALONG WITH THESE ARROWS.

"THE NEXT MORNING A LARGE NUMBER OF PEOPLE, AS WELL AS THE KAURAVA AND PANDAVA WARRIORS, CAME TO PAY THEIR LAST RESPECTS TO BHEESHMA.

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"FAINT WITH EXHAUSTION AND BREATHING HEAVILY, BHEESHMA UTTERED ONLY ONE WORD —

W-A-T-E-R !

"THE KINGS BROUGHT THE CHOICEST FOOD AND PITCHERS BRIMMING WITH COOL WATER. BUT BHEESHMA WOULD NOT ACCEPT THEM.

I DO NOT DESIRE THESE. I WISH TO SEE ARJUNA.

"AS ARJUNA ARRIVED —

O ARJUNA ! YOU ALONE CAN PROVIDE ME WITH THE DIVINE WATER I WISH TO DRINK.

"ARJUNA CLIMBED UP HIS CHARIOT AND SHOT THE PARJANYA* WEAPON INTO THE EARTH.

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* LITERALLY, RAIN

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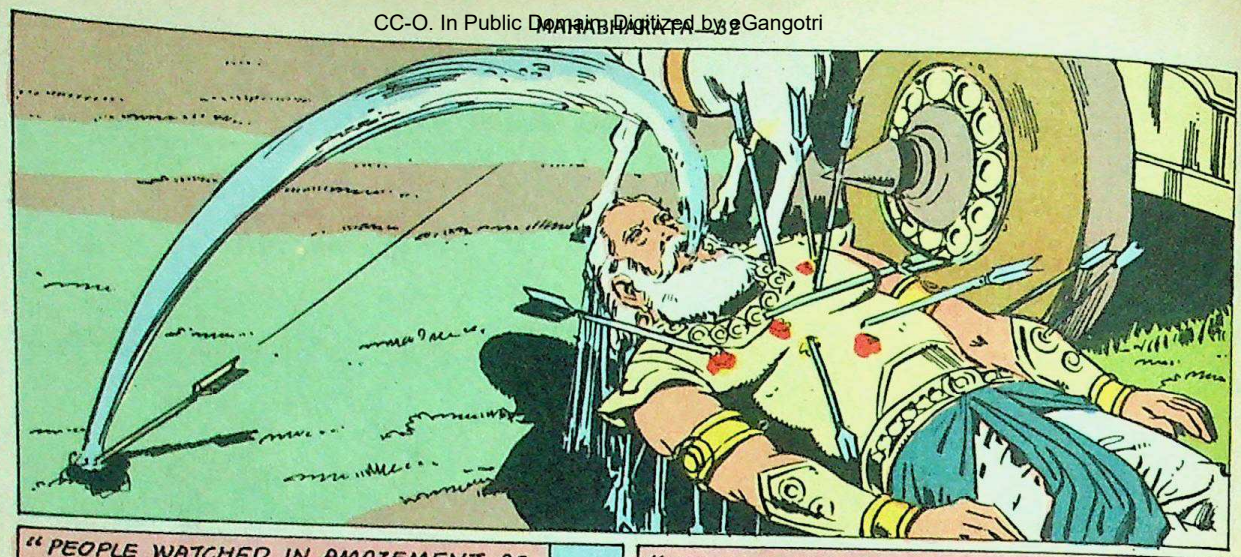

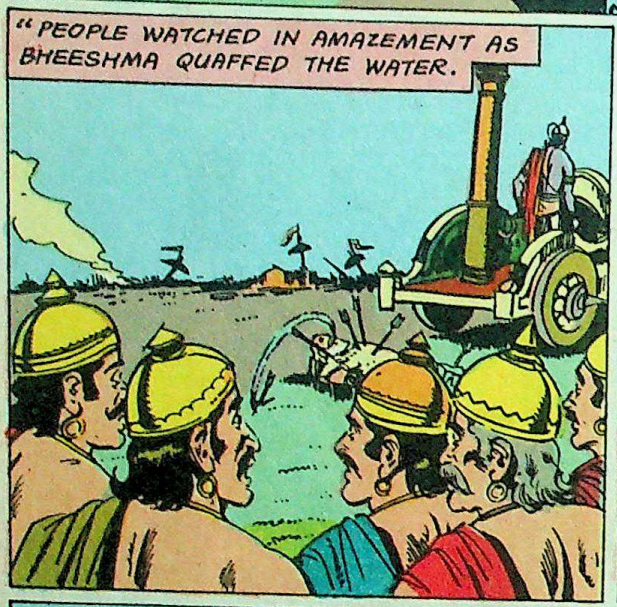

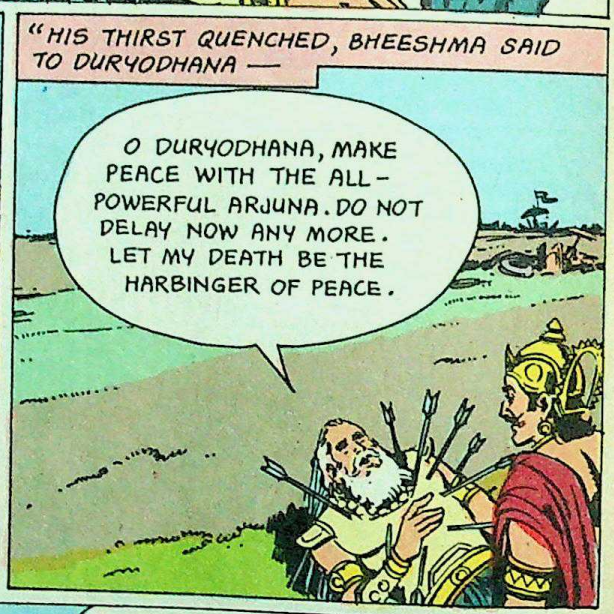

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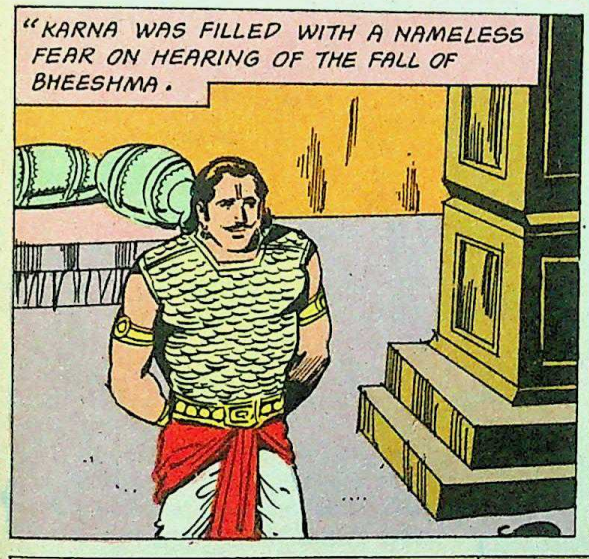

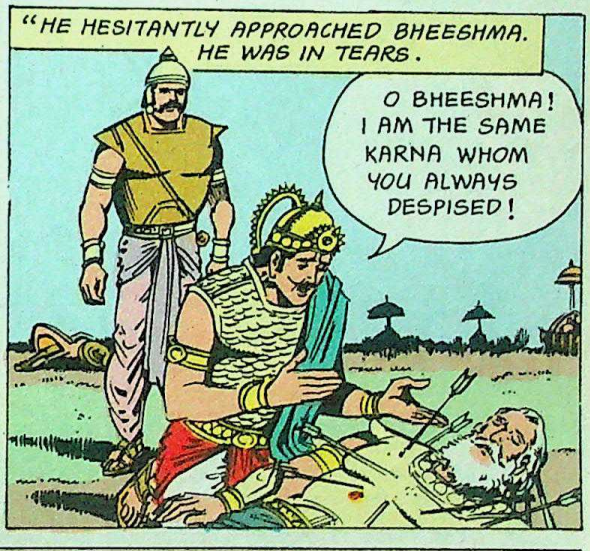

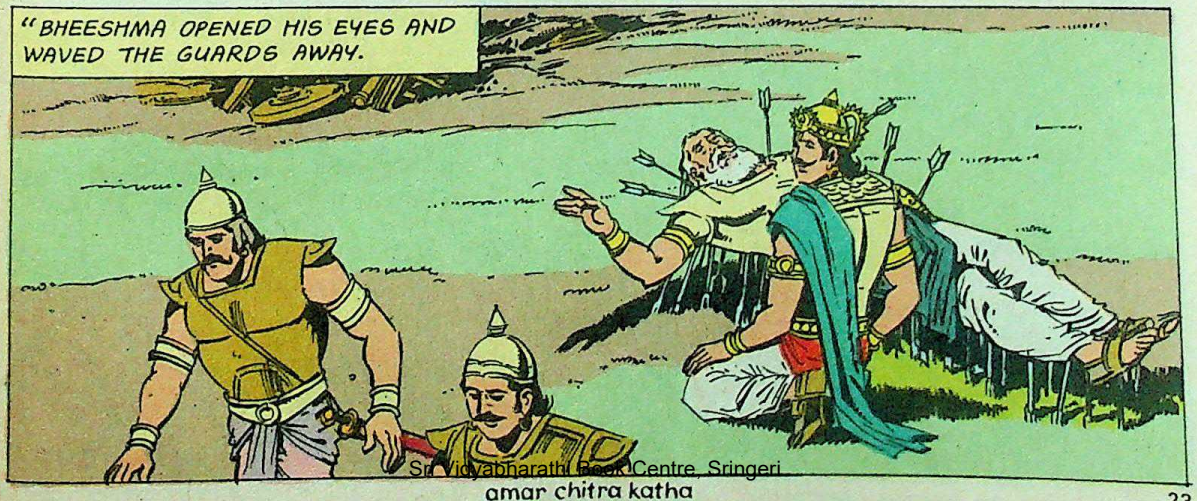

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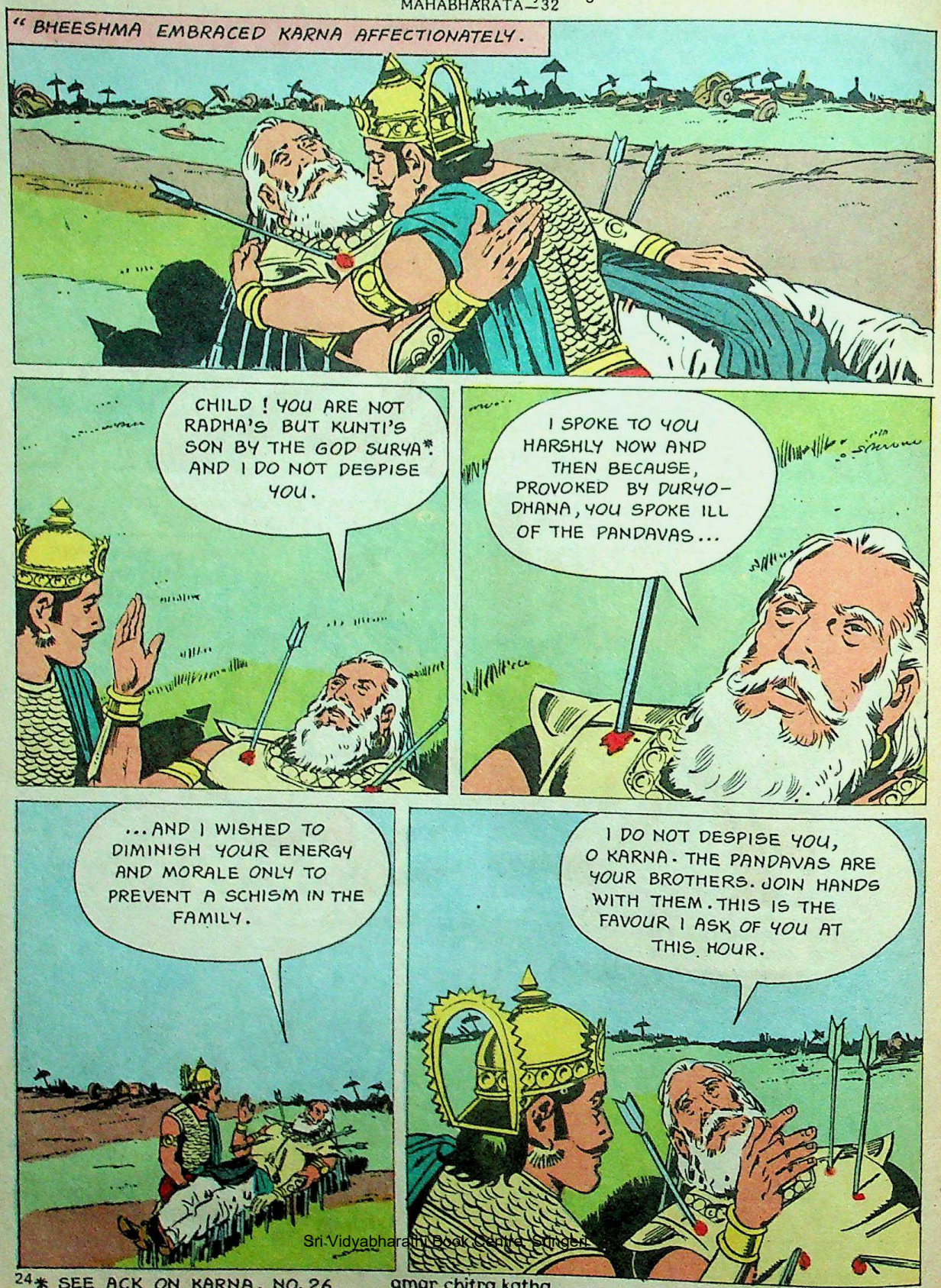

Sri Vidyabharati Book Castle, Shringeri

24 * SEE ACK ON KARNA, NO. 26

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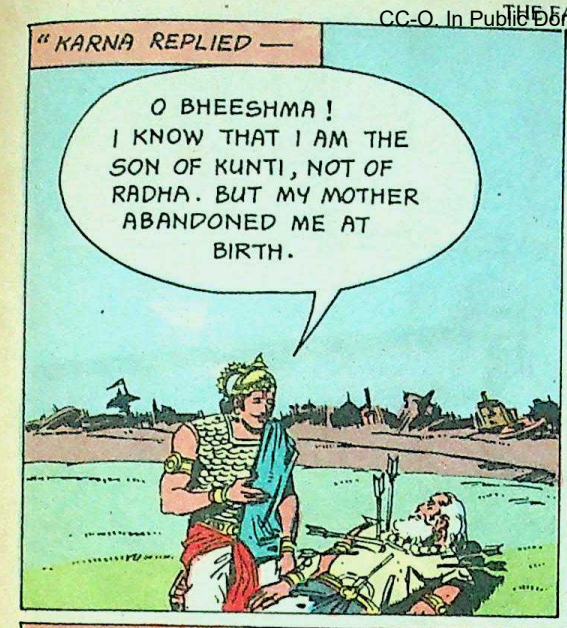

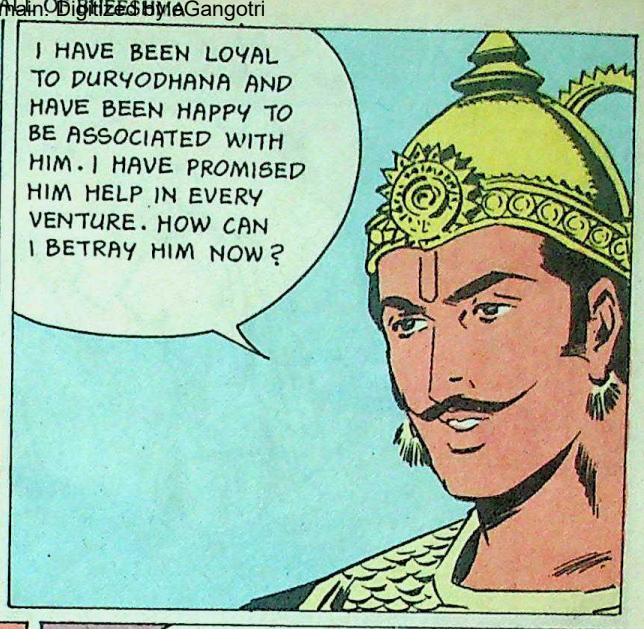

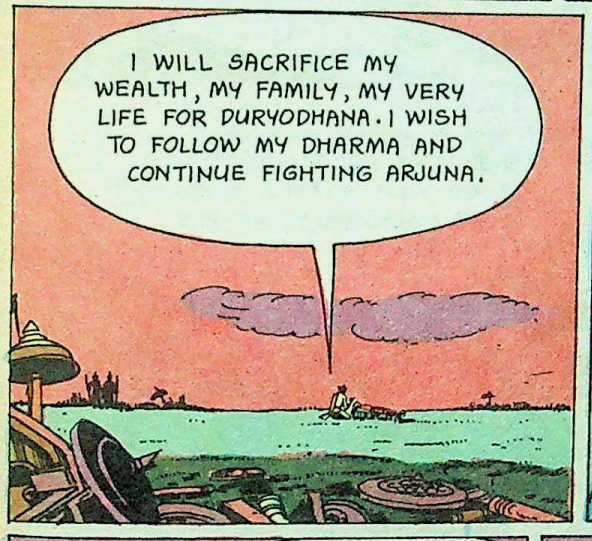

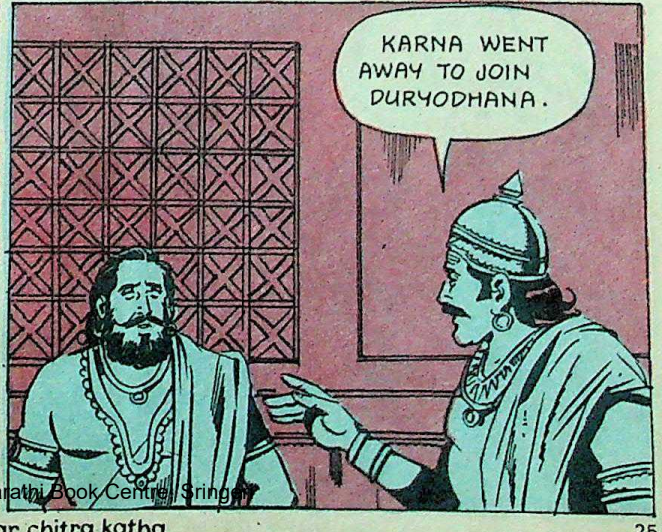

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Sri Vidyabharathi Book Centre - Shasan

+ KARNA WAS BORN TO KUNTI WITH THE BLESSINGS OF SURYA, THE SUN GOD.
* ARMOUR ⊕ EAR-RINGS.

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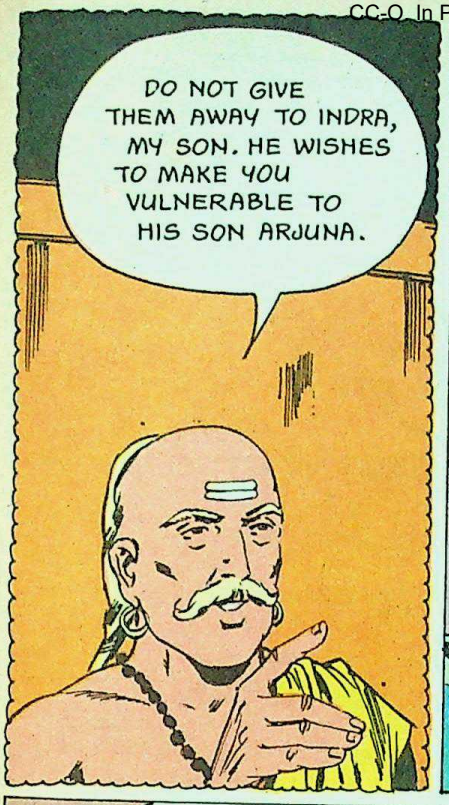

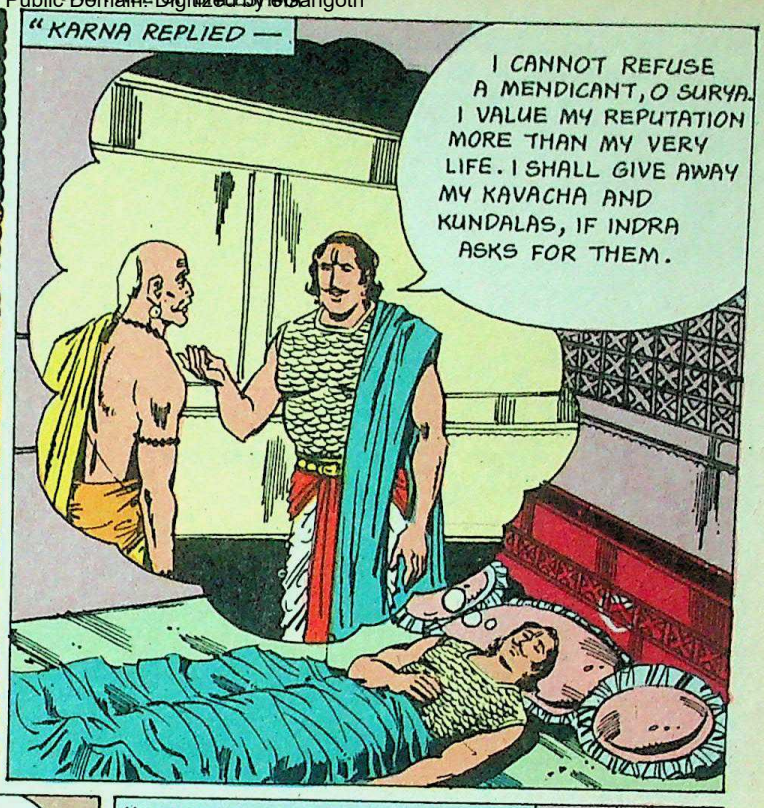

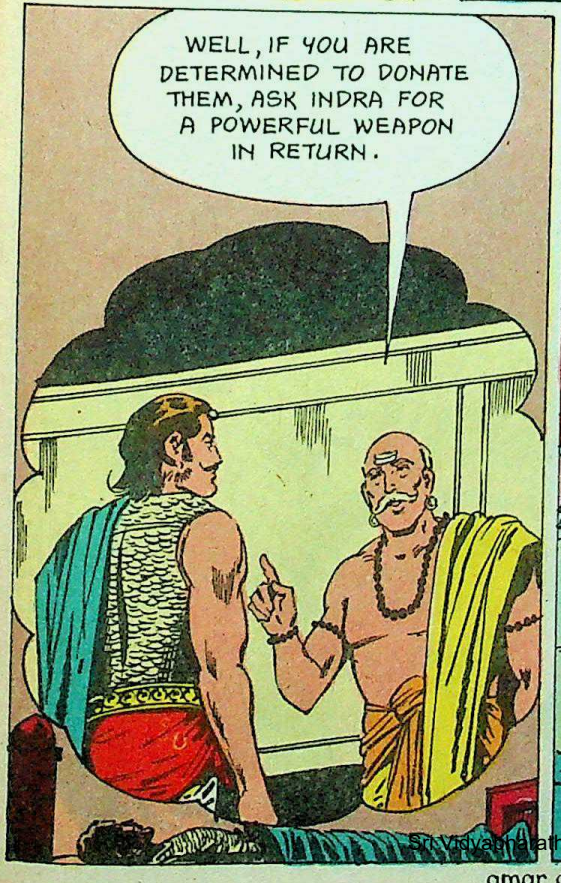

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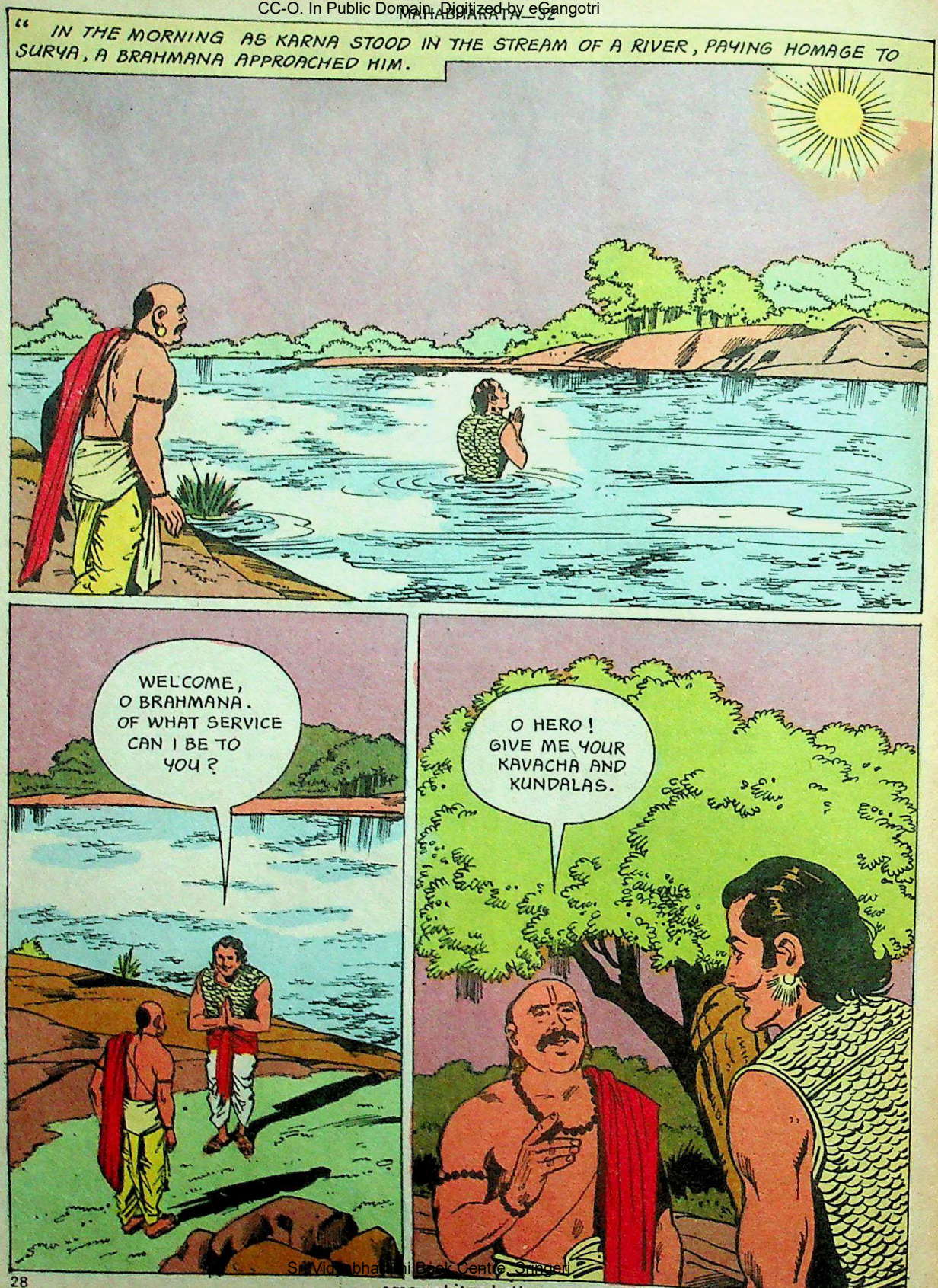

Sri Vidyabhavan Hindi Book Centre, Srinagar

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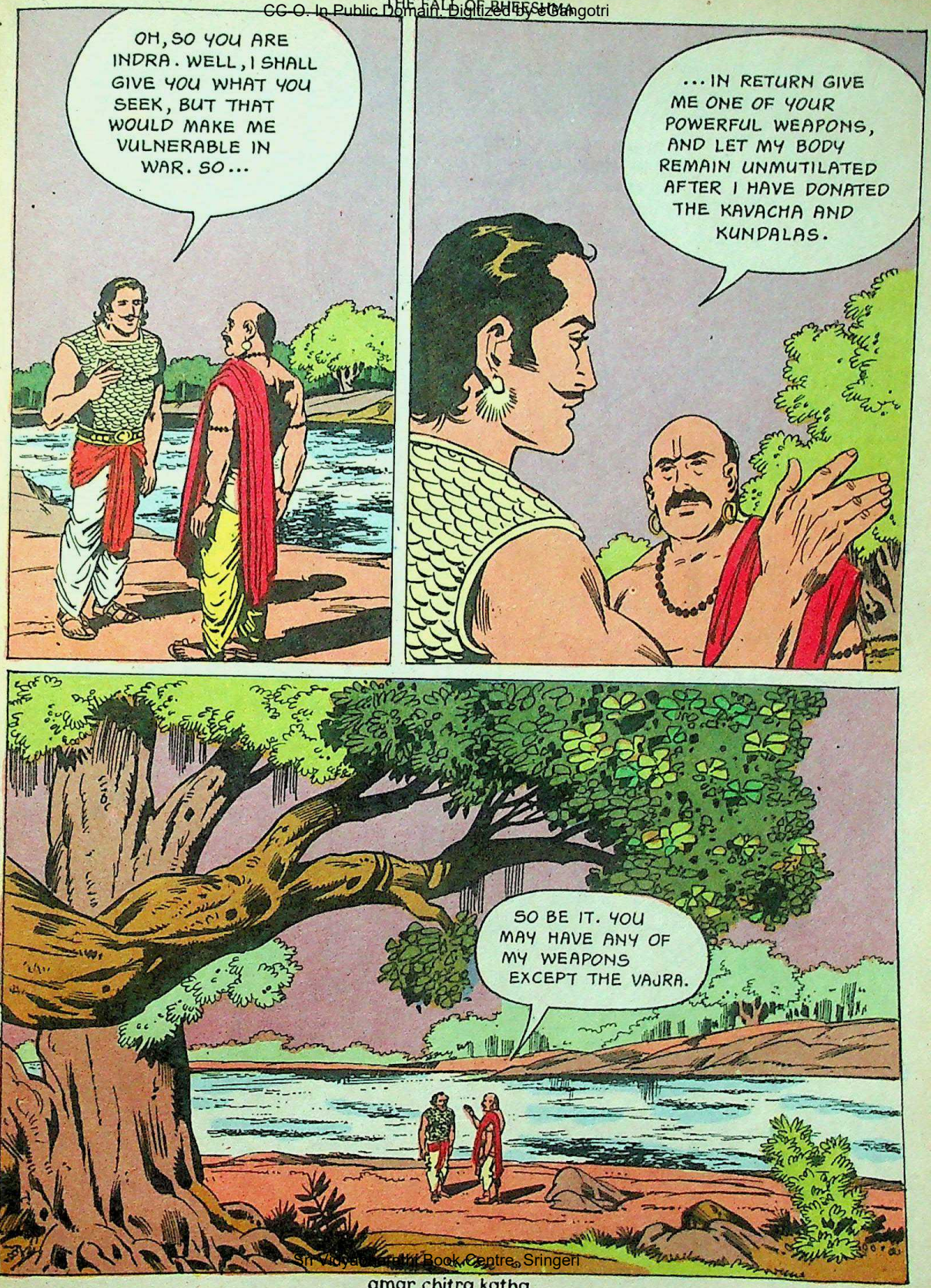

Sri Vijayendra Kadri Book Centre, Sringeri

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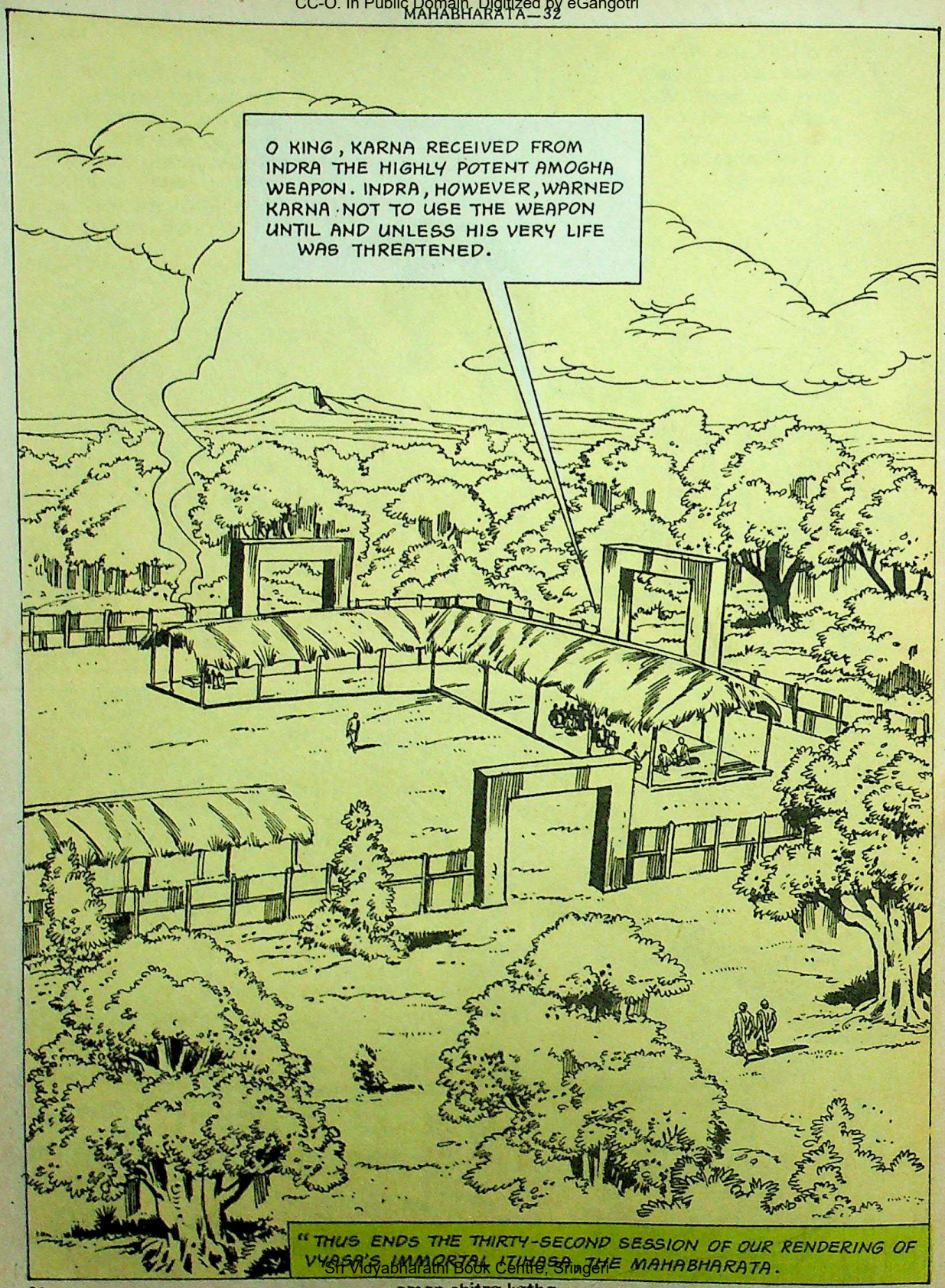

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"OKAY TROOPS, OPEN FIRE!"

Uncle Leo gave the order to attack. We lifted our guns and started firing. I had brought my Auto Rifle and Cowboy Special and Vivek had a Flying Saucer gun and Funshooter.

Bang, bang, rat-tat-tat, bang. The enemy, armed with Bull's Eye guns, Mauser pistols and Rat-A-Tats was coming closer.

But Ramesh saved the day with his fast-firing Jungle Commando. The enemy fled and we won the fight.

You can join our Leo gang too. If you don't have a Leo Funshooter, get one.

There's a whole lot of them and they are very good. That's what my Daddy says.

Sri Vidyaranya Pathi Book Centre, Sringeri

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The tastee victoree!

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